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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: POLITICAL PRISONERS GET NO AMNESTY

REF: A. 06 MINSK 1166

[1B](#). MINSK 399

[1C](#). MINSK 352

Classified By: Ambassador Karen Stewart for reason 1.4 (d).

[11](#). (SBU) On June 29, the conclusion of the Belarusian parliament's 2006-2007 session dashed hopes of a general amnesty that might release several Belarusian political prisoners. On June 25, GOB Interior Minister Vladimir Naumov announced that the GOB's Presidential Administration (PA) had been delaying submission of a proposed amnesty to parliament for months because of disagreements within the PA over the "exact definition of certain categories of citizens who could be granted amnesty." Despite the delay, on June 27, Belarusian MP Olga Abramova told us that the parliament still expected to receive the bill by June 29, the last day of the parliamentary session. (Note: In the past, the GOB has timed such amnesties to coincide with the July 3 Belarusian national holiday. End note.)

[12](#). (C) Also on June 29, independent media published a letter from imprisoned opposition youth organization Malady Front (MF) leader Dmitriy Dashkevich that revealed that authorities had denied Dashkevich conditional early release because of numerous alleged violations of correctional facility regulations (ref A). Dashkevich noted that authorities informed him of their decision one day after interrogating him regarding Ivan Shylo, a 16-year-old MF activist who currently faces two years in prison on charges of running an unregistered organization (ref B). Dashkevich's attorney, Aleksandr Galiev, expressed outrage that authorities did not notify him before interrogating Dashkevich and inform him of the parole denial.

Comment

[13](#). (C) Combined with the GOB's denial of parole to Dashkevich, the failure of the PA to submit an amnesty proposal to parliament speaks volumes about the ability or willingness of PA Deputy Natalya Petkevich to convince the hardliners of the need to make concessions to improve relations with the United States (ref C). A general amnesty excluding those imprisoned for their pro-democracy activities was likely nixed by the PA because it would have drawn more international attention and rebuke.
Stewart